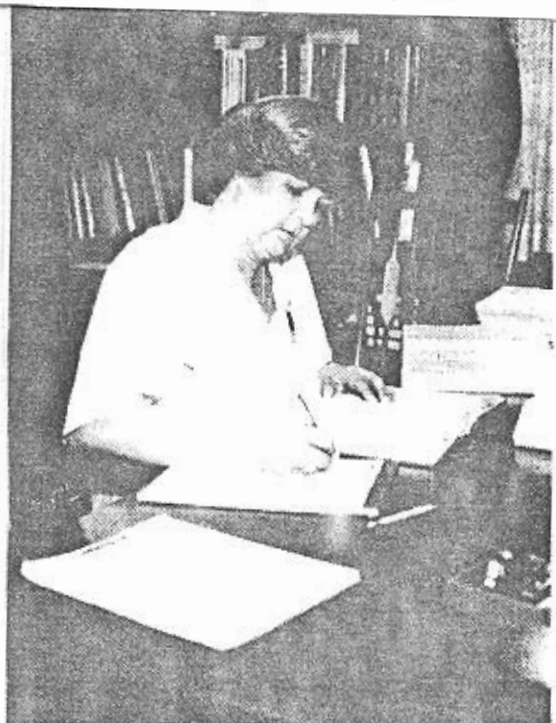




Dot Whitener, secretary for the WPCC Performing Arts Program and recipient of the college's first annual Outstanding Staff Member Award, is pictured conducting research in the Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr. Library. (Photo contributed)

Sen. Ervin instrumental in opposing anti-evolution

Morganton's favorite son, the late Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr., was instrumental in preventing North Carolina from passing an anti-evolution law such as the one which provided the basis for the famous Scopes "Monkey Trial" in Tennessee in 1925.

In "Humor of a Country Lawyer," Ervin wrote: "As trial lawyer, politician, and legislator, I recognized the pragmatic value of humor. An ounce of revealing humor often has more power to reveal, convince, or ridicule than do many tons of erudite argument."

"In opposing in the North Carolina Legislature of 1925 a proposal to prohibit the teaching of evolution in state colleges and schools, I employed ridicule. I made an observation to this effect: I confess with reluctance that the passage of this proposal would do good in one respect. It

would give joy to the monkeys in the jungle for the North Carolina Legislature to absolve them from responsibility for the conduct of the human race in general and the North Carolina Legislature in particular."

A proposal similar to that opposed by Ervin in North Carolina did become law in Tennessee. Known as the Butler Act, this anti-evolution law set off the courtroom battle known as the Scopes "Monkey Trial" and dramatized in "Inherit the Wind," a historical play by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee.

WPCC's Performing Arts Program will present "Inherit the Wind" on Nov. 12-15 in the college's Phifer Studio.

For more information, call Dr. Cheryl Oxford, coordinator of performing arts, at 438-6093.